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### Voice in French dubbing

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

Title: **Voice in French dubbing: The Case of Julianne Moore**

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### Abstract

It is an acknowledged fact that dubbing practices vary across countries. In France, it is common to have different dubbing artists lending their voices to the same foreign actor. For instance, Julianne Moore has had eleven French voices since the beginning of her career, and her French designated voice, Ivana Coppola, also dubs several other actresses, including Michelle Yeoh and Vera Farmiga.

This paper presents a short case study on the voices of Moore in France. I consider four films that were all released in 2014 in which she has four different French voices. The possible effect changes in her voice might have on French audiences is discussed using Freud's concept of the *uncanny*. This discussion is underpinned by a presentation of the different agents taking part in the dubbing process and a reflection on the methodological tools used, with a view to contemplate further research. My main goal is to show what happens to the voice of foreign actors in French dubbing, using Moore as a case study. The article also emphasises the importance of voice choice as part of a film's artistic content and eventually aims at triggering more conversations on voice as part of the dubbing process.

**Keywords:** dubbing; voice; uncanny; France; Julianne Moore.

### 1. Introduction

Twenty-five years ago, Candace Whitman-Linsen (1992) commented that, in France, well-known actors are usually dubbed by the same voice talent over periods of thirty years. This view is however contradictory to what current dubbing practices seem to indicate since, according to RS Doublage (l'annuaire du doublage Français - a database of information about dubbing and voice talents), even famous performers like George Clooney and Nathalie Portman have already had six voices each since the beginning of their career. A French voice talent is also hired to dub multiple American, English or Italian actors. Take for instance Ivana Coppola who is Julianne Moore's French main voice but also dubs several other actresses, including Michelle Yeoh and Vera Farmiga. Such practices entail that one body, that of the original performer, will have different voices in the dub, and that one voice, that of the dubbing artist, will be shared by two, three or four bodies. This, I claim, could prove confusing for viewers.

My research has been guided by an interest in uncovering the impact dubbing has on actor's performance and characterization. To this end I devised a tripartite model (Bosseaux,

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2015) to investigate how oral, acoustic and linguistic elements combine to construct characters and their performance in original versions, and how these are deconstructed and reconstructed in translation through dubbing. The present article builds up on this work although here, I primarily focus on one aspect of the model, the vocal or acoustic element, as I am interested in dubbing practices in France, and how the actress Julianne Moore sounds like when she is dubbed in this country.

Julianne Moore has four regular French voices but seven other women have also dubbed her. My analysis focuses on four films all released in 2014 (*Still Alice*, *Hunger Games: Mockingjay*, *The Seventh Son*, and *Non-Stop*) in which Moore has four different French voices. As Moore is given four different voices, I am particularly concerned with the way she sounds in these films and how she comes across in the original and dubbed versions.

This paper offers a description of Moore's voice in the above mentioned four films as well as their dubbed versions. It considers the possible effect changes in voices might have on French audiences using Freud's concept of the *uncanny*. Although the main focus is on the uncanniness of the experience as a spectator, the discussion is underpinned by a presentation of the different agents taking part in the dubbing process. The paper also reflects on the methodological tools used with a view to contemplate further research. My main goal is to show what happens to the voice of foreign actors in the French dubbing context, using Julianne Moore as a case study.

## **2. Voice as identity**

According to philosopher Malden Dolar (2006), it is possible to identify individuals through the sound of their voices as voices have different attributes: a particular pitch, timbre, accent, intonation (i.e. the melody of speech), cadence (i.e. rhythm) and inflection (e.g. modulation of intonation) will provide clues to a person's uniqueness or identity. Think for instance about the voices of Marilyn Monroe, Sean Connery, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mila Kunis, Jennifer Tilly, Michael Caine or Scarlet Johansson. Dolar adds that a voice is like a 'fingerprint', instantly recognisable and identifiable (2006, p. 22). Our voice is therefore part of who we are as it points to our singularity. It follows that voice can be seen as an integral part of our identity (for further discussion, see Bosseaux 2015).

Voices can be described in two ways. First, (para)linguistically using terms such as volume, tempo (i.e. speech rate), pitch (the musical note of a voice) or placement (i.e. the location of voice in the body). Secondly, with affective terms; for instance voices can be described as 'warm', 'maternal' or 'terrifying'. Voices not only generate and express meaning, but they also establish relations between performers and audiences. It is because voices have emotive and expressive qualities that they affect us. A sentence produced softly, as a whisper, may convey intimacy while the same words spoken loudly could convey an order. When describing voices, the two angles work together, for instance an actor with a high-pitch voice may be described as being facetious.

If a person's identity is created through their voice, it seems important to carry attentive voice analysis in the dubbing context. When describing voices, Barthes's notion of the grain of

voice is a useful starting point as it gives prominence to the link between voice and body, and the centrality of voice in our understanding of identity. For Barthes, the grain of a voice is 'the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs' (1977, p. 188). Barthes explains that a voice's grain 'affects us as listeners' as it is 'something that is brought to your ears in one and the same movement from deep down in the cavities, the muscles, the membranes and the cartilages' (1977, p. 179). A voice therefore carries the traces of a performer's body, and if we follow Barthes' reasoning, it is the body which gives a certain texture to a voice, something I will go back to when talking about placement in the methodology section.

Hearing the grain of the voice is a reflexive activity which affects audiences. My research is concerned with what makes us who we are with a specific emphasis on voice because it is through particular intonations, the way words and sound are formed in the body, that we sound the way we do. In what follows, I explore French dubbing practices using the case of Julianne Moore's voice to see how the grain of her voice is dealt with in French dubbing, and reflect on the possible effects of choosing different voice talents for one actress.

### **3. Dubbing in France**

Dubbing, or lip-sync, is an example of oral translation in which the original voice soundtrack is replaced with new voices speaking the language of the target country. It is not to be confused with voice-over, which does not involve lip-synchronization. Dubbing is the norm in many countries including Brazil, China, France, India, Iran, Korea and Peru. However, even in these countries subtitling is also used depending on the type of media (e.g. whether translation is done for a film or for television).

The works of Thierry Le Nouvel (2007) and Jean-François Cornu (2014) show that dubbing arrived in Europe with the birth of the talkies and that its use further developed during the Hollywood Golden Age, between 1927 and 1935. At this time, it was common for actors to dub themselves phonetically in multiple language versions. For instance, in the French context, famous actors Laurel and Hardy would actually learn their lines phonetically in French. These versions were very expensive, however, and dubbing and subtitling replaced multiple language versions to make foreign films available to national audiences.

In France, dubbing has been used since the early 1930's. Its application was reinforced under the Vichy Government (1940-1944), when what is now called the 'Centre National de la Cinématographie' [National Centre of cinematography] was created, and it was decided that only foreign productions that are dubbed would be accepted in the French market (Le Nouvel 2007). The dubbing process has therefore had many decades to develop and for many it is considered as an art form.

Dubbing involves many agents and its production chain is not uniform across the world as explained in Chaume 2007 and 2012, for instance. In this section, I present the various agents involved in French dubbing with a view to highlight the complexity of the dubbing process. A dubbing product is the result of collaborative work between translators, dialogue writers, dubbing directors, actors and sound engineers. Generally speaking dubbing companies

first send their text to translators who produce a rough translation and sometimes also perform the dialogue writing. If translating and dialogue writing is completed by different individuals, dialogue writers take on the following tasks: providing the lip-sync, integrating symbols (related to the *bande rythmo* system as presented in the next paragraph), organising takes and making the text sounds like oral discourse. When these tasks are not all carried out by dialogue writers, they are taken over by dubbing assistants. The text then goes back to the dubbing company, which is in charge of the artistic and technical side of the production. This is when the dubbing director takes over and chooses dubbing actors (also known as dubbing artists, dubbers or voice talents).

Dubbing directors are responsible for making sure that lip-sync, kinesic synchrony, isochrony and oral discourse match. To assist with this process, French dubbing companies use a specific synchronisation system called *la bande rythmo*, an added track containing dubbing symbols instructing actors when to start and stop speaking, characters' facial expressions or which tone of voice to use (Le Nouvel 2007, p. 20). For instance, Chaume explains that '[w]hen the text crosses a red (green, black) vertical line in the middle of the track (barre de 4recision) it signals to the actors that they should begin reading' (2007: 205). When this bar corresponds to a change of sequence, it has the function to delimit a loop ['boucle']. These loops are then numbered chronologically throughout the film and this allows the dubbing director to call the various voice talents on set in an organised manner (Le Nouvel 2007, p. 21). In previous research, I have commented that in French dubbed versions meticulous attention is dedicated to matching mouth movements (see Bosseaux 2015) and it is obvious that this elaborate synchronisation system enables French dubbing to do so.

Given my belief that voice is an integral part of identity, I consider voice selection to be the most important task for dubbing directors. Choosing the 'wrong' voice could have a terrible impact on the success of an audiovisual product. For instance, Chaume mentions (2012, p. 36) that the Italian dubbed version of *True Grit* (2010) has been criticised since, in the original Matt Damon's character mumbles after sustaining an injury to his tongue; whereas his dubbed Italian voice remains unchanged, thereby losing his idiolect in translation. Moreover, even if it is rather rare to hear actors talk about their dubbed voices, Zac Efron, on the Graham Norton Show has explained how shocked he was to hear his Spanish voice which he thinks is too high-pitched (2012). These few examples show how critical it is to choose the 'right' voices throughout a film or an actor's career to make sure audiences, including original actors, engage positively with the translated versions.

Dubbing directors also assist voice talents throughout the dubbing process. Generally speaking, directors are the only ones to see the film in its entirety, particularly in the case of blockbusters as production companies are often concerned with copyright infringements. Directors, for instance, give acting directions, provide plot information as well as character specificities since voice talents may only have been provided with the loops or takes they are involved in. In the documentary *Being George Clooney* (2016) various voice talents from Germany and Brazil explain that when recording for the dubbed versions of *Transformers Revenge of the Fallen* (2009) and *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003), they recorded their part in front of a black screen which only provided peeping holes for the mouths of the actors they were dubbing. Moreover, dubbers record their takes in a dubbing booth, usually working alone or

two at a time. This means that the film dialogue will be shot without interaction with one talent in one booth and another in a separate booth, with no turn-taking or responses to questions. The recording process is thus a 'continuous series of stops and starts, rather than a theatrical performance' (Chaume 2012, p. 37). When the recording is finished, sound engineers reassemble and edit the tracks, which have been dubbed separately. They are responsible for synchronizing the new dubbed tracks with the international track (composed of the musical track and natural sounds) and the original images. The product is then edited and, after the director has approved it, it is ready to go back to the TV channel or distributor (if it is a film).

Voice talents thus work under the supervision of dubbing directors, as do sound technicians or engineers. Directors perform a similar role to that of a film or TV series director, and they have the power to modify the initial translator's and dialogue writer's words if they feel that changes are needed. It can also happen that voice talents change lines of dialogue if they feel that they do not fit the style of their acting. When I visited a French dubbing studio in Paris (Mediadub International), in 2008, I experienced this first hand: voice talents were performing a scene of a film for television and a word was used that the director and team deemed racist. The word was changed and the scene re-recorded. Engineers also have their say when it comes to making changes to the translation.

By presenting the various agents of the dubbing production chain, this section has highlighted the complexity and richness of the dubbing process. Although constraints have been studied extensively, it is fair to say that sound quality and acting have been under-researched in audiovisual translation, perhaps because such studies go beyond the actual work of translators. When dealing with dubbing specifically, I think it is crucial to ask questions related to the appropriateness of the target voices, by which I mean whether or not voices fit the new bodies they inhabit. I thus focus specifically on the importance of the criterion of acting in dubbing practice with reference to Julianne Moore's French voices.

When concluding this section, the work of Sofía Sánchez Mompeán is worth mentioning as it so far provides the only empirical studies on prosody, i.e. patterns of stress and intonation. Sánchez Mompeán considers paralinguistic as well as prosodic elements (tonicity, tone, tonality, pitch-direction, pitch-range, loudness and tempo) in original and dubbed versions in order to demonstrate the importance of pronunciation when establishing meaning. Overall, she argues that intonation is more often than not overlooked and emphasises that dubbed versions are 'often depleted of the connotative richness transmitted through intonation in the original sitcom' (2016, p. 18). It is therefore worth investigating further voice, including intonation, as its transplantation could be a reason why our experience of dubbing is *uncanny*.

#### **4. The *Uncanny***

Freud defines the uncanny as a 'province' that 'belongs to all that is terrible – to all that arouses dread and creeping horror' and 'tends to [evoke] whatever excites dread' (1919, p. 1). This feeling comes into play when the distinction between imagination and reality is blurred or erased, for instance when considering undead creatures like zombies and vampires, which should not be alive but yet are. The uncanny 'effects a disturbing transformation of the familiar

into the unfamiliar' (Freud 1919, p. 15); in simple terms, then, it is the result of the familiar being defamiliarized.

In a dubbed version, the body of an actor is inhabited with another voice and it is fascinating to hear voice talents describe their relationship to the bodies they borrow. For instance Louise Helm, who dubs Megan Fox and Scarlett Johansson for the German market says that dubbing these actresses is 'like you're breathing through that person' (in Mariano 2016) and the French dubber Samuel Labarthe, George Clooney's French designated voice, talks about the intimate relationship he has with the actor (ibid). The relationship between body and voice is therefore one of intimacy and unity.

The concept of the uncanny can be applied to examine what dubbing does in two ways. Firstly because in dubbing a familiar body, a foreign performer, speaks with a voice that is not her own, or a familiar voice is heard coming from a body that belongs to someone else. A feeling of alienation or estrangement arises when one accidentally realizes that the voice of a performer whom they have heard in many films is not actually her own, but that of another actress, another body. The uncanny can also be felt from the perspective of audiences who have been used to hear one voice in the dub and then discover that this performer has, in another language, another voice borrowed from another body. When such realisations occur, audiences are left to wonder whose voice it is that they are listening to, and to grapple with the fact that a human being speaks with a voice that is not her own. The dubbed voice acts like a ghost voice haunting the body of the foreign actor. And this voice, much like a ghost, can even move from one body to another, like that of the French voice talent Isabelle Gardien inhabiting, at various times, the bodies of Julianne Moore, Cate Blanchett and Emily Watson.

In relation to Barthes' concept of 'grain', this uncanny process can lead to a loss of character's specific meaning in dubbed versions. Here, I focus specifically on the French dubbing context as it is common for actors' voices to change from film to film. For instance, Julianne Moore has had 11 voices since the beginning of her career and she is not an exception: Brad Pitt has also been dubbed by 10 different actors, Michael Fassbender by six, and Ben Affleck by eight actors. Interestingly the same French voice talent, Jean-Pierre Michael, has dubbed them all, and he also gives his voice to Ethan Hawke, Christian Bale, Matthew Broderick, Jude Law and Keanu Reeves.

The significance of changes in voice or voice sharing has not been studied systematically even if a few scholars have commented on these practices. For instance, Sanchez Mompeán highlights that the 'limited number of dubbing actors does not suffice to provide a colourful repertoire of tones, necessary to convey all kinds of voices and sound convincing' (2012, p. 2), which recalls Mingant's emphasis that there is a neutralization of accents in French dubbing with 'most Hollywood male actors tend[ing] to have the neutral voice of a man in his late thirties' (2010, p. 722). In what follows, I consider this aspect further as I comment on the impact changes in voice may have on audiences using the case of Moore's French renditions.

So far, we have seen that voice is an integral part of identity as claimed for instance in the works of Dolar (2006), Barthes (1977) and Bosseaux (2015). Moreover, choosing voices was identified as a crucial step in the dubbing process. The concept of the uncanny was also brought in to explain the potential effect of dubbing on audiences. Indeed, the resulting experience of



realizing that one is hearing a voice that does not belong to the body from which it emerges can be explained using Freud's concept: understanding that actors speak with voices that are not their own is a fascinating and potentially disturbing experience. In dubbing, we are dealing with paralinguistic elements and prosodic features such as intonation, rhythm and volume. The next section thus presents the methodology used to analyse Moore's voice and explain how it has been reconstructed in dubbing.

## 5. Methodology

As mentioned previously voices can be described (para)linguistically or with affective terms. Paralinguistic elements are important to take into consideration as they can change the meaning of the words: a rise in volume or a change in intonation can transform the underlying meaning of an utterance, e.g. from an intimate conversation to a threat. To analyse Moore's voice, the following paralinguistic elements, or key descriptors, will be used: pitch, tempo, melody, breath, rhythm, phrasing, tone, articulation, inflection and placement. The following paragraphs briefly present these descriptors<sup>2</sup>.

Pitch, a non-verbal element of communication, corresponds to the musical note of a voice. It can be further described in terms of range (the limits between which the pitch is produced, e.g. 'high' and 'low') and level (e.g. loudness). A pitch range is associated with evolution, i.e. a voice can change in pitch throughout one sentence or a conversation, ranging from monotone, i.e. no pitch variation, to a maximally wide pitch range. Different pitches will have different meaning: a wide pitch range can characterise excitement and a narrow one, tediousness. Beside pitch, tempo (the pace of speech, e.g. fast, slow or moderate) must also be considered as it contributes to the particular sound of a voice, alongside the related notions of durational variation and dynamic range, corresponding to the degree of duration (e.g. *lento*) and the loudness of a sound. For instance, when we lengthen a word it is usually to convey a particularly emotion, e.g. 'whaaaat!' has wide durational range to express excitement or anger. Dynamic range refers to the varying degrees of sound, e.g. from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. Emotions are also communicated through rhythm (cadence) and volume, both of which are complimentary to tempo: speech can be smoothly flowing, staccato, syncopated or rushed. The volume may be loud, soft or varied. All elements combine, e.g. anxiety may be communicated by a breathy voice, a narrow pitch range and rushed rhythm.

Apart from pitch, tempo, rhythm and volume, voices can be described using seven qualities or criteria listed in (Table 1) below:

quality	contrasting adjectives
tension	tense / low
roughness	rough / smooth

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<sup>2</sup> For a full presentation of these terms, see Bosseaux 2015.



breathiness	breathy / smooth
loudness	loud / soft
pitch register	high / low <sup>3</sup>
vibrato	vibrato / plain <sup>4</sup>
nasality	nasal/ clear

Table 1

Voices can therefore be described using two opposing adjectives following a graded process. For instance, a voice can be labelled as high or low but it is not merely high or low; it can range from maximally low to maximally high. These seven criteria offer a toolkit to analyse actors' vocal fingerprints in original and dubbed versions. My analysis will thus incorporate these sound qualities as they combine with paralinguistic elements (pitch, tempo, volume and rhythm) and affective adjectives to generate meaning.

Where voice comes from, in the body, also contributes to its sound. This is the notion of placement. A voice is generated from various body parts throughout the head (including different parts of the face and throat) and upper body (diaphragm, stomach and chest). All of these locations will produce different sounds, e.g. if a voice comes from the chest, it will be low and it will be high if it originates from the head. Pitch also varies depending on placement: a voice coming from the abdomen or the chest, will have a lower pitch than if it were placed in the face, where the pitch will be high(er). There are therefore different sounds or pitch characteristics depending on location, e.g. a voice will sound nasal if coming from the nose, husky if coming from the throat, or strong if coming from the diaphragm. Additionally, every movement of the mouth and tongue, as well as the amount of air taken in, will contribute to generating a different sound.

The way vowels and consonants are formed is also a question of placement since the latter also refers to the way we open our mouths. Different sounds are produced depending on where vowels and consonants are produced in the mouth. Vowels are either closed, with the airflow blocked, or open, with a free flow of energy. Additionally, the position and movement of the tongue during their articulation, i.e. their dimension, also determines the sound.

There are three aspects of vowel dimension: frontality, height and aperture. Frontality, corresponds to the place in the mouth where vowels are formed, at the front of the mouth. Height, relates to the position of the tongue in the mouth (e.g. high and low, as in 'up and down'). The last dimension, aperture, relates to the opening of the mouth (e.g. the rounded vowels /o/ and /u/). In a dubbing context, the way vowels are formed is of importance as words in translation will not have automatic one-to-one 'shape' equivalents, and voice actors cannot be expected to pronounce words in the exact same way as they were uttered in the original.

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<sup>3</sup> In music, low and high voices are also referred to as 'chest voice' and 'head voice'.

<sup>4</sup> A voice can be plain and unwavering or possess a kind of grain, i.e. traces of the physical can be heard in a voice in the form of a vibrato.

Consonants can also be listed according to three qualities: place (where they are articulated in the mouth), manner (how they are formed), and voicing (the presence or absence of vibration in the vocal cords). Voicing corresponds to the difference between consonants that have tone (i.e. loud) and consonants without tone. The voiced consonants are /l/, /m/, /n/ and /v/, while the unvoiced or voiceless consonants are /h/, /f/ and /s/. As for manner, there are three ways in which consonants may be formed. *Plosives* involve a sudden release sounding like an explosion. They can be voiced (/b/, /d/ and /g/) or unvoiced (/p/, /t/ and /k/). Unvoiced consonants are articulated with a puff of air, e.g. the bilabial /p/. Then, *fricatives* produce friction. They can also be unvoiced (/f/, /th/ in 'thing', /s/ and /sh/) and voiced (/v/, /th/ in 'those', /z/ and /zh/ in 'Jasmine')<sup>5</sup>. Finally, *nasals*, comprise /n/, /m/ and /(si)ng/, which are all voiced and resonant. No fundamental obstruction is involved when they are formed and air flows freely through the nose, with the mouth remaining closed and the sound not fully uttered. The type and dimension of vowels (e.g. height) and consonants (e.g. plosive) will thus be used in my analysis to describe Moore's voice in both versions.

For one thing, this methodology shows that describing voices is an arduous endeavour: various elements all require exploration, including timbre (vocal quality), rhythm and pace, tessitura (vocal range), breath control, and articulation (how the voice approaches syllables). This task is also highly subjective since different observers may use different adjectives to qualify the same voice, e.g. a 'tense' voice may be called 'clear' or 'piercing'. Moreover, context always needs to be taken into consideration because various connotations may be attached to sounds. It is because of this subjectivity of interpretation that there are methodological issues attached to the analysis of the effects of dubbing on voice and identity. Identifying what is the exact impact of a voice change in dubbing may ideally be done through surveys, questionnaires, etc. However, a single analysis is still valid, since, as Douglas Pye points out when discussing tone in films, 'however difficult we may find it to articulate them [our feelings], these are not experiences that confine us in our own subjectivity: more often than not our grasp of tone is shared to a significant extent by others' (2007, p. 74).

This short piece thus focuses on Moore's vocal fingerprint and identity by highlighting what happens when Moore is dubbed in France by several voice talents. I claim changes to her voice from one film to another can create an uncanny experience for French audiences. I focus on the relationship between Moore's voice and her body as it embodies it. Indeed, if, as Dolar claims, it is 'the voice that holds bodies and language together' (2006, p. 60) and 'if there is no voice without a body' (ibid), where does this leave Moore's national identity when she is dubbed?

## 6. The case: Julianne Moore

### 6.1 2014: four films, four voices

The American actress Julianne Moore has been famous since the 1990's. She has been praised for acting in a wide spectrum of films from comedies, Science Fiction and Fantasy to thrillers and more serious dramas. Generally speaking Moore's voice is slightly nasal mostly because of

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<sup>5</sup> /l/ (frictionless fricative) and /r/ (semi-vowel), can also be added as they also involve some constriction.

her American accent, from North Carolina. Additionally, there is a slight grain to her voice, as her breath mixes with her voice, particularly in moments when she whispers. Moore is a very expressive actress: her voice often modulates as she varies her pitch from low to high. These modulations render her speech pattern melodic, and her voice can be said to have warm overtones. For instance, when Moore modulates her voice it can become higher with lower overtones being reduced and higher overtones increased. The voice is then sharper, brighter, and tenser. Then, in the same sentence her voice can become more relaxed, even mellow. Generally speaking Moore sounds well educated as she articulates well, forming her vowels and consonants fully. Of course with each role come different intonations as the actress modulates her voice in specific ways to create her characters, but overall her voicework is quite subtle when she performs across different genres.

Chion has commented that ‘the work American actors devote to vocal accents and timbres [also] allows them to reassert their identity as actors’ (1999, p. 172) and that one consequence of this ‘voicework’ is that audiences come to identify a voice with a specific actor. Moore’s breathy melodic voice can thus be seen as an integral part of her performance style and it is fair to say that by casting her, directors know that she will be able to deliver a sustained performance, whether she is a nurturing mother, a malefic witch or a tortured Hollywood star.

According to RS Doublage<sup>6</sup>, Julianne Moore has been dubbed throughout her career by 10 different actresses: Brigitte Berges (one role), Laurence Breheret (one), Juliette Degenne (one), Danièle Douet (one), Malvina Germain (one), Virginie Ledieu (one), Isabelle Gardien (three), Déborah Perret (five), Rafaële Moutier (eight) and Ivana Coppola (11). Moreover, Moore’s French Wikipedia page<sup>7</sup> also lists Cécile Paoli who has dubbed her in five films. Hence Perret, Paoli, Moutier and Coppola can be considered Moore’s main French voices with 11 films and one TV series for Coppola, who is Moore’s French official or designated voice.

Moore has therefore had 11 voices in different roles. This means that a French audience following her may have heard 11 different voices throughout her career. This is not uncommon in the French dubbing industry; Brad Pitt has been dubbed by 10 different actors, although Jean-Pierre Michael is his designated voice. Michael is also Michael Fassbender’s official voice even if Fassbender has been dubbed by five other voice talents. This situation, I claim, is uncanny leading to a possible mismatch of experience for audiences. In what follows I consider four films, all internationally released in 2014, in which Moore has four different voices. The versions used in the analysis are the French dubbed versions released on their respective DVDs (all of which from region/zone two). My primary goal being to present readers with the French dubbing context, particularly in terms of choosing voices, the ensuing analysis provides a snapshot of what happens to Moore’s voice in four films. Given the restriction in number of words, it was not possible to analyse all four versions in depth. I have therefore singled one short extract for each film in which Moore is having serious conversations with her co-stars, as these require similar voicework, even if she is playing different characters. Despite the limitations in scope, this snapshot analysis should provide readers with a good overview of how

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rsdoublage.com/acteur-4709-Julianne-Moore.html> (last accessed 17 November 2017).

<sup>7</sup> [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julianne\\_Moore#Voix\\_fran.C3.A7aises](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julianne_Moore#Voix_fran.C3.A7aises) (last accessed 17 November 2017).

dubbing is practiced in France and highlight the various layers of the uncanny.

#### 6.1.1 *Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1.*

In this Fantasy film, Moore plays President Alma Coin, co-leader of rebel forces, President of District 13. She is a villain, an antagonist. The analysed extract occurs when she first comes onscreen. Alma Coin's voice has a medium to high pitch and a medium range. It is fast pace. There is variation in volume as she whispers and also speaks at normal volume. When she whispers her voice is particularly breathy. There is a soft rhythm to her delivery. She is soothing, somehow maternal and nurturing. This perception of her speech is accentuated because of the unvoiced fricative consonants: /s/, /f/ and /sh/. In this role, Moore's voice is breathier than in *Alice*, for instance.

In French<sup>8</sup>, Moore is dubbed by Déborah Perret. Perret's voice is also breathy but she speaks lower than Moore. She speaks softly, is graver and grainer because of an abundance of /r/ (voiceless fricative). She sounds very soothing as well as maternal and nurturing like Moore. Even if Perret's voice plays more on the soothing side of Moore's voice, it is an overall good match with Moore's voice. This being said, Perret is also known for giving her voice to Michelle Yeoh and Cate Blanchett. Therefore, in 2014, audiences could also have heard her voice in *The Hobbit*. Moreover, her voice also inhabits different bodies on television, e.g. Laurie Holden in *The Walking Dead* (2010 –) and Daphne Zuniga in *Law & Order: special victims unit* (1999–). Finally, Perret also lent her voice to Juliette, in *Juliette je t'aime* [Juliette I love you], a Japanese anime that was very famous in France in the 1980s.

#### 6.1.2 *Non-Stop*

In this thriller, Moore plays the part of Jen Summers. She has a breathy voice, i.e. her breath mixes with her voice and she has an incisive way of talking (e.g. when she says 'call the captain'). In the passage, a serious discussion with co-star Liam Neeson, she is first softly spoken then her pitch gets higher. She speaks fast because she is defensive. When she speaks softly she also sounds seducing. She conveys many emotions through various speech variations: softer, louder, then back to whispering. When she says 'when I fly' for instance, she raises her voice and sounds more assertive, as she exploits the higher range of her tessitura.

In French<sup>9</sup>, Moore is dubbed by Isabelle Gardien whose voice is also breathy, even if less so than Moore. Gardien's voice is also lower and she sounds more mature than Moore's voice. In this passage, Gardien comes across as more annoyed, but she is still a little seducing. There is less variation in her speech and she sounds more monotonous and serious, e.g. when she says 'avion' [plane] her voice is lower. Her voice is grainy, because of the many /r/ sounds. It is actually a close match in terms of breathiness but the voice sounds more mature. An additional

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<sup>8</sup> Dubbing Studio: Dubbing Brothers [Allo Doublage, [http://www.allo doublage.com/glossaire/definition.php?val=1665\\_hunger+games++geai+moqueur++part+1](http://www.allo doublage.com/glossaire/definition.php?val=1665_hunger+games++geai+moqueur++part+1)], last accessed 24 November 2017]

<sup>9</sup> Dubbing Studio: Dubbing Brothers, dubbing director: Barbara Tissier (RS Doublage).

uncanniness comes from the fact that Gardien is also the French voice of Cate Blanchett (also dubbed by Perret) and Emily Watson. This means that if you watched *Monuments Men* (2014) you would have heard her voice there too. She also works for TV and is the voice of Rya Kihlstedt in *Drop Dead Diva* (2009– 2014) and *Dexter* (2006– 2013).

### 6.1.3 *Still Alice*

In this drama, Moore plays Alice Howland, a university professor who discovers she has Alzheimer, a performance for which she won an Oscar. In this film, Moore has a higher pitch than in other ones. Alice's voice is high in pitch and is also nasal, with quite a grain and breath or friction in the voice. Moore varies volume and pitch according to the lines of dialogue (e.g. when she says 'find myself' her voice gets lower and then she goes back up). She has a soft voice and she articulates well, pausing between words to highlight them.

In French<sup>10</sup>, Moore is dubbed by Rafaële Moutier, who performs less variation in pitch and volume. Alice is talking to her daughter, played by Kirsten Stuart. She is explaining to her how it feels to live with Alzheimer. Moutier's voice is higher yet it is raspy or hoarse. It is more nasal, but more monotonous as there is less variation in her voice than Moore's voice. Overall, Moutier sounds younger than Moore. Actually the French voices of Stuart and Moore are more similar than they are in English in terms of pitch, and cadences; there is much more commonality between the two voices. What I think is also uncanny is that Moutier also lends her voice to Jessica Chastain and Laura Dern. Therefore, if you saw *Interstellar* (2014) and *Wild* (2014), you would also have heard Moutier's voice but on two other bodies. On television, you would also have heard her voice in Emily Procter's body from *CSI Miami* (2002– 2012).

### 6.1.4 *The Seventh Son*

The final film, is another Fantasy film, in which Moore plays Mother Malkin, a malevolent witch. She is a villain, an antagonist. Moore's voice is a little graver in this film, particularly when compared to *Non-Stop*. Mother Malkin's voice is breathy and grainy. She also varies from high to low pitch, from whispering to medium volume. There is depth to her voice, more staccato, variations, and she swiftly modulates her pitch and volume. When she says 'I like boys', for instance, she sounds incredibly playful, and when she says 'soul' there is a long variation. Moore's intonations add to her physical appearance as a playful temptress; she is beguiling and dangerous. Her voice is bright and her timbre clear.

Moore is dubbed by Ivana Coppola, whose voice is rather nasal with a medium to high pitch, making her sound more like a teenager than a grown woman. Both voices are what one would call 'head voices' but they nevertheless do not match. Coppola's voice is clearer yet twangy. She overacts and speaks like a stereotypical witch, when she says 'oh un jeune homme' ([oh a young man]), for instance. She is breathy at times, very minimally though, but this high nasality and high pitch are not present in Moore's voice. Coppola does play with the volume or variation in her speech but to a minimum and she sounds more monotonous. This is not to say that she

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<sup>10</sup> Dubbing Studio: Cinephase (RS Doublage).

does not sound dangerous but her voice is not as discordant. She is more stereotypical. The uncanny comes particularly from the fact that Coppola dubs other actresses. She lends her voice to Michelle Yeoh and Vera Farmiga (who are also both dubbed by Perret). Therefore, if you watched *The Judge* (2014) you would have also heard her voice then. On TV, Coppola also lends her voice to Kelly Hu in the US TV series *The 100* (2014–) as well as in *CSI*. This voice choice also seems to confirm what Patrick Zabalbeascoa, Natália Izard and Laura Santamaria have claimed happens in Spain (including Catalonia), i.e. that voices are chosen on the basis of characters rather than on the original voices of actors (2001, pp. 106– 107). They explain for instance that male characters are usually dubbed with low voices ‘unless the character is to be laughed at or is effeminate’ and that this creates, as we are seeing here, ‘mismatches’ between voices in OV and DV (2001, p. 106).

## 7. Concluding remarks

This article presented a case study on Julianne Moore who has 11 French renditions and, more specifically, four different voices in four different films all released in 2014. I have shown that not only dubbing prompts us to rethink actors’ identity, as it changes the relationship between a body and her voice, but it also encourages us to reflect on the materiality of voices and of voice (choice) as part of a film’s artistic content.

We have been left to ask what actually is Moore’s French national identity, and wonder what do audiences feel when they watch and hear her on screen. By this, I do not mean to say that because Moore speaks French, she automatically *becomes* French. A French audience undoubtedly knows that Moore is an American actress and that she acts in English speaking films. However, I would like to claim that even though films keep their original diegetic world when they are dubbed, the fact that all dialogues are in the language of the Target Audience, in my case French, can somewhat transpose the film world to a French world, as audiences hear actors speak consistently in their own language. To my knowledge, there are no studies available to corroborate such a claim. However, I would like to argue that even if audiences are aware that dubbing is a make-believe device, since they do not reflect on dubbing practices, they cannot know how dubbing works and what it implies. To my mind, such lack of understanding could have an effect on audience’s perception of the translated material: some French viewers may only know Moore’s French voice(s) and this can be said to imbue her with a French identity.

According to Chion (1985, p. 74), the source of sound is normally understood to be what is seen on-screen – something which dubbing changes drastically. This article has emphasised that audiences who watch dubbed films, as opposed to subtitled versions, do not hear the same voices throughout an actor’s career. As a result audiences may become aware of dubbing as a practice since, in dubbing, the original body is separated from her original voice, even if dubbed films give the illusion that the voice and body are working together; I call this realisation, uncanny. This is not to say that this practice is strictly restricted to sound in dubbed films. Indeed, dubbing, or post synchronisation, is also used in original language films. However, as my focus lies in dubbing across languages, this practice cannot be developed further. For



more on this topic, please consult Viviani's work on the creation of the 'cinematographic creature' (2011) and Bosseaux (2015, pp. 57– 58).

This case study seems to confirm what Chion had claimed twenty years ago: that when American films are dubbed in France, 'there is no longer the same dubbing-actor's voice used for each film of a star' (1999, p. 172). This statement is completely contradictory to Whitman-Linsen's (1992) conclusions as cited at the beginning of this article, but Chion also added that '[o]nly for movie stars in the classic sense – stars who always play themselves, like Arnold Schwarzenegger or Sean Connery – do French spectators get to hear the same dubbing voice from film to film' (1999, pp. 173– 4). It is easy to refute the latter statement as RS Doublage lists three voices for Schwarzenegger up until 1998, and since the website does not list further voices after that, the number may actually be greater. Zabalbeascoa, Izard and Santamaria also identify a norm in the Spanish context by which famous film stars are dubbed by the same voice talent as often as possible irrespective of the character they are playing so as 'to create an illusion that each star has his or her own voice in Spanish or in Catalan' (2001, pp. 106– 107). They claim that this allows 'actors to be recognised in Spain by their dubbed voices since they can't be by their own' (ibid). However, as in France, voice talents also lend their voices to different actors and the authors mention a 'so-called radio-play effect' which occurs when the 'same dubbing actor is recognised by the audience as having lent his voice to many actors already' (ibid), as was shown here with e.g. Blanchett and Moore sharing the same voice. It is also crucial to reflect on the role of dubbing directors in this context, who, as explained in section three, are responsible for identifying voices. When writing this article, I attempted to contact one of the dubbing directors to ask what the criteria for voice selection were, and how a selection is made. Unfortunately, I did not get an answer. It would be useful if more researchers established contact with dubbing directors to find out such information, as it would help us understand the reasons behind current practices and work towards more fruitful collaboration with the industry

This short article has singled out four French voices for the actress Julianne Moore with a focus on the uncanniness of this practice, particularly as the French voice talents also lend their voice to multiple actresses. The vocal analysis has shown that some of these voices are more appropriate than others. Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, who has commented on the dubbing process in Germany, explains that a 'good' dubbing voice 'tends to match the appearance of the original actor more than the original actor's voice (2007, online). This is also corroborated by the Italian voice talent Francesco Pannofino - George Clooney's designated voice in Italy - who explains that a dubbed voice should fit the face of the original actor (in Mariano 2016). Meyer-Dinkgräfe also adds that a dubbing voice has to be 'both appropriate for the original actor and it should appeal to a wide range of listeners' (2007: online). In all four films, one can say that Moore's French voices are 'good' or 'appropriate' as each attempts to convey the essence of Moore's voice and of characters, even if some voice talents have been shown to overplay their characters (e.g. Coppola). However, what I feel we lack in most cases is the complexity of Moore's voice; her various modulations and specific melodic patterns. Some of my impressions of Moore's voices thus echo Chaume's comment that, in dubbing, there are always 'clear voices with tight articulation' (2012, p. 18). I am not arguing, however, that dubbers should mimic the intonation of original actors, a practice that Chaves (2000) identifies as 'la curva', which was



used in Spain to dub the first American films. It would be better if, instead, they could ‘bear in mind the intended purpose and try to reproduce the same effect by making use of their own patterns, which could indeed coincide in both languages’ (Sánchez Mompeán 2012, p. 95).

One should also emphasise, when discussing pitch differences and mismatches between the original and dubbed versions, that these also have to do with phonological differences between the French and English languages. An additional reason, beyond dubbing, is the differences in sound-mixing practices in France and the United States, as explained by a French sound mixer (in François Justamand (dir.) 2006, p. 100). Differences are therefore not solely a matter of Moore’s vocal features, and those of her French counterparts: other factors would need to be taken into consideration when carrying a more in-depth study.

Even if this article has answered a few questions regarding dubbing French practices, it leaves us with a few more: does a French audience really know what Moore sounds like? Should only one French voice talent lend their voice to one actor? In the German market, it is interesting to highlight that George Clooney has had two voices: that of Detlef Bierstedt in the first instance, and then that of Martin Umbach. When Umbach took over, after a casting for a Steven Soderbergh film, audiences complained and the first actor was brought back (Mariano 2016). It would therefore be interesting to conduct a study on French audiences, showing them different films with Moore’s different voices and ask what they think of them. As to having only one designated voice overtime, perhaps we should also inquire about the economic consequences of such a choice: would voice talents still be able to make a living if they could only lend their voices to one actress?

Methodologically speaking, describing voices has been shown to be a challenging task. It is indeed difficult because most of us are not trained to hear voices. Dolar points out that ‘usually one hears the meaning and overhears the voice, one “doesn’t hear [the voice] well” because it is covered by meaning’ (2006, p. 4). My work focuses on how voices sound to counteract this fact. I put emphasis on their sounds, tone, and melodies to emphasise that a voice is an integral part of identity. Even if how things are said can never be fully dissociated from what is said, I think it is important to put emphasis on how a voice sounds, as opposed to what is uttered, since much of meaning is conveyed through the tone of a voice, for instance, and meaning can be overridden by a particular tone or volume of voice. Moreover, the uncanny comes from how an actress sounds as opposed to the lines of dialogues. This is why, in this article, I focused on sound as opposed to the meaning of the words produced. Future research may include surveying wider audiences to see if my conclusions could be corroborated since, as Sánchez Mompeán also highlights, we need to organise more reception studies ‘to draw more solid conclusions on the significant bearing’ of prosody in dubbed versions (in press, pp. 29– 30).

It is also important to emphasise that my research ultimately aims at giving more importance to translation at pre-production process, particularly the importance of choosing a voice and looking into being consistent with voice choice, because translated versions contribute greatly to the financial success of films and television series:

over half (60.5% and 57%, respectively) of the revenue obtained by the leading top-grossing and Best Picture Oscar-winning Hollywood films made between 2001 and 2011 came from foreign markets. Of this, more than three-quarters (80.4% and

76.3%, respectively) was from foreign countries where these films are subtitled or dubbed' (Romero-Fresco 2013: online).

Arguing that dubbing should not be confined to the distribution process and that it should at least be part of the post-production process is, I think, of crucial importance. Having directors engage in conversations with dubbing directors and translators, for instance, as Stanley Kubrick used to do (Zanotti, in press) seems more than necessary in order to achieve versions of the uttermost quality, throughout an actor's career.

I would like to conclude this article by reflecting further on the uncanny and its effects. It is legitimate to wonder whether there would be less or more uncanniness if the voice of a dubbing actress were a very close match to that of the original one, and their voicework impeccable. As I claim that the uncanny is felt when we realise that a voice does not belong to the body from which it emanates, this fascinating question can only be unravelled through audience survey research. For the time being, I would like to point out that this is not my only concern. Rather, I argue that however similar, 'good' or 'appropriate' voice choices are, the uncanny will always be there *as long as* a body is associated with someone else's voice. Additionally, even if we were to have one designated voice following an actor's throughout their career, the uncanny would still be there, as it is inherent to the practice of dubbing.

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